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Editorial

Robin Skeates

The General Editor

Durham University, UK

Welcome to the fourth issue of the *European Journal of Archaeology* for 2014. Here, we present six general articles and eleven book reviews, which extend plenteously from the Lower Palaeolithic right through to the twentieth century. Below, I summarize and evaluate their significance to the archaeology of Europe.

Jaroslav Řídký and his colleagues from the Prague Institute of Archaeology seek to understand how the multiple enclosure ditches of Late Neolithic rondels in the Czech Republic were filled. Focussing on artefactual and chronological data from the recently excavated sites of Kolín and Vchynice in Bohemia, they identify a combination of natural and cultural formation processes — unrelated to the original use of the rondels and operating on different timescales. In general, the bases of the ditches were filled rapidly by natural sedimentation, the central portions were then filled gradually by natural and cultural processes, while eventually the upper parts were filled quickly by refuse from adjacent post-Neolithic settlements. This basic

model could now be expanded further to explore the relationship between the ditches, the centre of the rondels, and their surrounding micro-regions.

Helle Vandkilde considers how, in the Bronze Age of southern Scandinavia, the southern lowland zone (in Denmark and Scania in southernmost Sweden) came to form a unified, transformative, cultural ‘hot spot’ region characterized archaeologically by a clustering of Nordic-type metalwork (made with central and Atlantic European copper), in contrast to a metalwork-poor northern zone characterized by a rich tradition of rock art. More specifically, she examines how the formation of this hybrid Nordic Bronze Age was energized by transcultural connections with the distant Carpathian Basin (itself stimulated by cultural changes in the Aegean initiated by the catastrophic Thera eruption), particularly at around 1600 BC, along which flowed a novel set of objects, warrior ideology and cosmology. Leaving aside the inevitable chronological quibbles, this is an excellent interpretative article, which integrates substantial empirical knowledge of the European Bronze Age with some important theoretical concepts.

Ben Raffield discusses the deposition of weapons in English rivers and wetlands during the Viking Age, building upon the ideas of Julie Lund. He argues that, despite Christianity having dominated England for some time, the arrival of the Scandinavians in the ninth to eleventh centuries triggered a marked resurgence in ritual depositions of a deep-rooted pagan nature, particularly along the liminal, watery margins of landscapes that were subject to conflict and control. He also suggests that these depositions might have been made not only by Scandinavian groups but also by Anglo-Saxon groups. In this way, Raffield contributes to on-going debates about

ritual practice, hybridity and the Viking diaspora. However, specialists might wish to question the binary oppositions of Christian/pagan and Viking/non-Viking that seem to underpin his account.

Magdalena Naum examines the social and cultural dynamics of the multi-ethnic, late medieval, trading town of Tallinn in Estonia. She defines the major urban ethnic groups living in the lower town (Estonians, Germans, Scandinavians, and Russians) and discusses their co-existence, self-definition and processes of categorization, emphasizing the active role played by material culture in visualizing and negotiating identities. This is a thoughtful and thought-provoking article, which successfully combines historical and archaeological evidence, at the same time as advancing the critical discussion of ethnicity from the perspective of material culture in the medieval eastern Baltic.

Russell Palmer presents an initial classification and interpretation of imported and local red earthenware ceramics in nineteenth century Malta — an under-explored archaeological resource — in order to shed new light on international trade, local production, foodways, and (British) colonialism. Focussing on assemblages from the Inquisitor's Palace site, he identifies a basic distinction between Maltese and other Mediterranean wares used for food preparation and storage and British table wares used for eating and drinking. He interprets this pattern in terms of a local population that, although maintaining older traditions of food production and preparation, was starting to imitate British and north European dining practices. This is a welcome contribution to the nascent field of post-medieval Mediterranean archaeology, and could become a baseline for further research.

Yannick Van Hollebeeke and his colleagues from Ghent University provide an evaluation of archaeological research into the physical remains of World War I (WWI), assessing how such research has developed over the last ten years through work undertaken by professional archaeologists in West Flanders in northern Belgium, whose landscape formed part of the Western Front. They confirm that there has been a general increase in the number of field projects in which WWI features are being investigated by archaeologists. However, they also reveal that WWI features have been missed by archaeologists at some sites, partly due to their failure to make use of available historical sources, such as trench maps or historical aerial photographs. It would appear, then, that conflict archaeology has not yet achieved full recognition in Europe, despite its relevance to WWI landscapes not only in Belgium but also in France, Italy, Slovakia, and Turkey, not to mention landscapes affected by more recent wars. Hopefully this article, as well as the attention given in 2014 to the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of WWI, will contribute to achieving that goal.

Turning to the reviews section, we begin with Randy McGuire's critical discussion of how we honour and remember our esteemed colleagues — in this case, with reference to a volume dedicated to the life and work of Bruce Trigger. Next, two major edited volumes on the archaeology of death and burial and on environmental archaeology are reviewed. For prehistorians, Cyprian Broodbank's monumental book on the prehistory and early history of the Mediterranean is followed by edited volumes on flint mining and on textiles from the Hallstatt salt mines. Historical archaeology is covered by books on Roman Ocreulum, medieval Wallingford, and on

the dismantling of Roman and medieval architecture in subsequent periods. Finally, two thought-provoking volumes on public and professional archaeology are evaluated.

If you are interested in submitting an article on any aspect of European archaeology, or have recently published a book that you would like us to review, or have a suggestion for a special issue of the *EJA*, do please get in touch with a member of our editorial team or visit us on <http://www.maney.co.uk/index.php/journals/eja/>.